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# YAKIMA AND CLICKITAT INDIAN WARS,

1855 AND 1856.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS  
OF  
CAPT. U. E. HICKS.

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H. M. S. THE PRINTER, PORTLAND.



## ⇒PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS⇒

—OF—

### CAPT. U. E. HICKS.

SCENES, INCIDENTS, DANGERS AND HARDSHIPS

ENDURED DURING THE

### YAKIMA AND CLICKITAT INDIAN WAR,

1855 and 1856.

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I was residing on a donation land claim, on Chambers' Prairie, five miles east of Olympia, Washington Territory, in the fall of 1855. News had been received that the Indians east of the Cascade mountains had murdered Sub-Indian Agent Bolan and several gold-hunters *en route* to the Colville mines, among whom were one or two well-known residents of Olympia.

No one at that time had any fear of the Indians west of the mountains. They were generally regarded as a cowardly fish-eating, root and clam-digging race, with the instincts of a *cayote* and the habits of a beast. Strong drink and the small-pox was fast destroying the males, while a worse fate had overtaken the females. They fell an easy prey to the vices of the white man, while imitating few of his virtues.

The Hudson's Bay Company still held their forts and trading posts in various parts of the country, and although it was generally believed their agents and former employes were inimical to the settlement of the country by the American or "Boston" immigrants, still they were not seriously suspected as being engaged in arming the Indians, or secretly favoring an outbreak. They, however, held the larger share of the Indian trade, and as many of their employes had taken up with Indian wives, the savages naturally looked to them—or the "King George" men—as their best friends. Large numbers of Hudson's Bay muskets, balls and powder had been traded to the Indians, and a common community of interests was apparent between them.

The American white population of the Sound country at that time was, perhaps, not much above 5,000; while the Indian pop-

ulation was variously estimated at from 12,000 to 20,000. Perhaps not one white man in five possessed a gun or fire-arm of any kind. The game of the country was principally deer and fowl, and the Indians did most of the hunting.

Governor Isaac I. Stevens had called for several companies of volunteers, forming the 1st Regiment, to act in conjunction with the small force of regular soldiers then stationed at the several military posts in Washington Territory, and the volunteer forces of Oregon, for the purpose of quelling the outbreak east of the mountains, and had proceeded in person to the hostile country, leaving Secretary C. H. Mason in charge as acting-Governor during his absence. Maj. James Tilton, Surveyor-General of the Territory, was commissioned Adjutant General of volunteers.

A company was formed in Olympia, mounted and equipped, under command of Judge Gilmore Hays. This company, which had pretty well drained that neighborhood of spare men, horses and guns, had joined with the U. S. troops from Fort Steilacoom, and perhaps one or two other small companies from further down the Sound, and were on their way over the mountains, when a runner, by the name of "Bill Tidd," came in from by the way of the Columbia river, informing the authorities at Olympia that the Oregon volunteers and soldiers east of the mountains had driven the hostiles in towards the Nachess Pass, over or through which the Sound troops had to pass, and were in ambush in sufficient force to scalp the entire company of whites. Tidd was immediately dispatched with orders to Hays to return, which could only reach him in time to prevent this calamity by riding furiously all night and a part of the next day. Perhaps not more than one man in five hundred could have accomplished this trip, but Bill Tidd did it.

The Indians all along the Sound seemed to be aware of the fact that war had broken out east of the mountains, and a few of the bravest among them had shown signs of discontent and mutterings. It was known that numbers of them were gathering in and about Connell's Prairie, near the headwaters of Puyallup and White rivers, but still no great uneasiness was felt by the whites. A few old settlers, well-known to the Indians, volunteered to go out there and have a talk with them, not dreaming that they were exposing themselves to any great danger in so doing. The special chief among the Indians along the upper Sound was named Leschi, who had been chosen and appointed chief by Gov. Stevens, on account of his superior intelligence and seeming friendliness toward the whites. The Indians, however, never fully recognized him as their head-chief, but adhered to their tribal relations, each tribe following their own sub-chief. Though the Indians west of the Cascades were all apparently of the same stock, and all spoke the same common *jargon* or "Chinook" language, yet there were many small tribes among them, each



with a slight or positively different dialect, and all more or less intermixed blood with each other and with the Yakimas and Clickitats. Satisfactory treaties had been concluded between them and the whites several years previous, and to this day it has never been successfully claimed that these Indians became hostile in consequence of dissatisfaction or fraud in treaty matters. It may well be doubted whether these Indians would have ever had the courage to fight the whites had they not been more than pursued to it by allies either east or west of the mountains. That they had cause can not be denied.

Such was the state of affairs, when on the morning of October 30, 1855, A. M. Poe, a gentleman well-known then on the Sound, came riding furiously past my cabin door, warning the neighborhood that the Indians had all broken out on the war-path; were murdering the whites as fast as they could overtake them; that a number of white families had been massacred on White river; Abe Moses, the sheriff of our county, was killed; the old settlers who had gone out to have a talk with the Indians had been treacherously attacked and some of them killed, among them McAllister, an old well-known resident of that county, and a warm friend of the Indians; Connell, of Connell's Prairie, was killed, and that the Indians had the others of the old settlers surrounded in a little log cabin on the Puyallup bottom; that he (Poe) and one other had managed to escape in the night time, one going towards Steilacoom, the other towards Olympia, to give warning as fast as they could ride. When one horse gave out another was procured, and thus the startling, horrible news was rapidly spread throughout all the settlements.

My wife had just given birth to her first child. An ox team and wagon was procured and, with the assistance of the neighbors, she was lifted into the wagon and hauled to town, five miles over a then somewhat new and rough road. On arrival at Olympia in the evening the wildest state of excitement prevailed. The neighbors for miles around were flocking there as fast as any kind of a conveyance could be had, and at night every available shelter or shed of any kind was taken, under which women and children were huddled, while the men ran hither and thither in search of arms and ammunition for defense. A home-guard company was quickly formed, Isaac Hays, Captain, and picket-guards stationed on the surrounding hills, who kept vigil watch all night, expecting at any moment an attack from the Indians. Within a few days several blocks of the town-site were stockaded, by placing spilt logs, ten or twelve feet in length, on end, close together, leaving convenient port-holes to shoot out from.

About this time news was received that Gov. Stevens was shut off and surrounded by hostiles in the upper country; also that Maj. Haller had been defeated, and the Indians all over the north-west, from British Columbia to California, were up in arms and

massacreing the whites. Much anxiety was felt for the safety of the Governor, and terror and confusion prevailed generally. It was then made manifest how utterly unprepared the whites were for such an uprising, which until then had scarcely been thought of, and men and women, with blanched faces and terror-stricken countenances, appealed to each other for help and protection.

Several small companies were sent out as scouts to the various settlements, to watch for Indians, gather up the stock, put things to rights, as far as possible, around the farm houses, and procure provisions. Aid was called for from Oregon and California, and a few arms and supplies purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company's stores.

Two days following our escape to Olympia, A. B. Rabbeson, Bill Tidd and ———, came in to the settlement east of town, foot-sore, ragged, torn and bleeding, having made their escape from the hostiles near Connell's Prairie, forty miles distant. From them it was learned that upon the turning back of Hays' company, five of the company, Abe Moses, A. B. Rabbeson, Dr. Burns, the company surgeon, and — Miles, an Olympia lawyer, got permission to come on ahead of the main column, in company with express-rider Tidd. Upon arrival at Connell's Prairie, the first open space of any magnitude this side of the mountains, they discovered that Connell's house, barn, out-buildings and fences had been burned or were still burning. They rode up among a lot of Indians, many of whom were well-known to the whites, among whom was Leschi, the chief above mentioned, Stayhi, his half-brother, and Kanascut, another brave and desperate well-known chief. The Indians evinced sullenness, but made no actual hostile demonstration. After a short parley the whites rode on, their route making quite a detour or circle after leaving the spot where the Indians were, and entering a large swamp, some three-quarters of a mile in length. The Indians quickly cut across through the timber, secreted themselves alongside the trail, and when about midway through the swamp, they open fire upon the whites, one ball passing through the body of Abe Moses, coming out in front, but he still stuck to his horse; another bullet hit Bill Tidd in the back of the head, flattened and fell down his back, inside his shirt-collar; Mr. Miles' horse was either hit or threw his rider, upon which he could not again mount, and his remains were found a few days afterward literally hacked to pieces. The party pushed on through the swamp and rode perhaps a mile or more, when Moses gave out. They all dismounted, except Dr. Burns, who put spurs and dashed on through Finnell's Prairie and disappeared in the woods and brush on the further side. He was found, four days afterward, hid in a hay stack on the Puyallup bottom, having abandoned his horse on reaching the opposite side of the prairie, and crawling on his hands and knees through the timber and brush, at night time, until he reached this to him

seeming place of safety. His horse was afterwards shot, by mistake, by a picket-guard, and his saddle-bags and pistols were untouched by the Indians, they being afraid of the medicine carried. The remaining party laid Moses down by the side of a log, a short distance from the trail, covered him with their overcoats and left him to die, the poor fellow giving the Masonic sign of distress on their leaving him. They then took to the woods, and by dint of crawling and hiding during the day time, and moving cautiously at night, succeeded in reaching the settlements, in a torn, bleeding and exhausted condition.

The day following the above episode, the company of old residents above referred to, consisting of about twenty men, with Charles Eaton as Captain (Eaton had an Indian wife), and Jas. McAllister, First Lieutenant (the latter was one of the first white settlers in the country, and could talk with the Indians in their own language, as also could Eaton to some extent), who had gone out to have a talk with the Indians, reached the Puyallup crossing. Here the main company halted, while Eaton, McAllister and Connell, accompanied by two friendly Indians, went on and met the Indians near Connell's home. They went unarmed, to show the Indians that they had come for a friendly talk. They had a talk with the red rascals, who professed friendship and promised that they would not join the hostiles, when Eaton and his little party started back to the Puyallup. They had just passed the big swamp above referred to, when they were fired upon by the savages in ambush, and McAllister and Connell killed; Eaton and one of the friendly Indians making their escape, while the other remained with the hostiles. The main company, having heard the firing, took refuge in a small log cabin, which Eaton reached just in time to save his scalp, when the red devils, drunk with the smell of human blood, made a furious assault on the cabin, keeping up the attack until daylight the next day, when they got wind of the return of Hays' company and hastily scampered off into the woods and mountains. It was from Eaton's company of "Puget Sound Rangers" that the white settlements first received warning of approaching danger.

When Hays' company and the regulars reached Connell's Prairie, about this same time, they quickly discerned the state of affairs, and immediately attacked the Indians, driving them across White river, and up Green and Black rivers, towards the mountains to the north-east. It being impossible to follow them further into the mountains without opening trails, and heavy storms setting in, the troops returned to the settlements and went into winter quarters. It was then learned that a terrible massacre had occurred on White river, a short distance above Seattle, in which three families, by the names of King, Braunan and Lake, had been horribly butchered, the women outraged, their breasts cut off and their bodies thrown into wells and cess-pools, and the



children cut in twain. All were killed except two little boys whom an old squaw hid in the brush while the devils were doing their bloody work. These boys were afterwards rescued from the Indians, and were taken East to their relatives by E. T. Gunn, of Olympia. While in San Francisco they were taken to the California theatre, and during the play were brought on to the stage and their condition stated to the audience by a friend, and it is said the stage was nearly covered with silver half-dollars.

The Indians had evidently been watching the movements of the white troops on the Sound, and when they supposed the soldiers and volunteers had crossed the mountains to fight the Yakimas and Clickitats, they had planned to make a general sweep of the Sound country; kill all the men and children, and take the women and what stock and property they coveted into captivity. But the sudden and unexpected return of these troops frustrated their designs, and no doubt saved one of the most extensive and terrible calamities ever recorded in the annals of savage warfare.

The dead were then gathered up, brought in and buried, and most of the farmers near the towns returned to their homes, built stockades and blockhouses, or fortified their dwellings the best they could, and prepared for the winter's storm. A stockade was built around S. D. Ruddell's residence on Chambers' Prairie, small board shanties erected on the inside, where some five or six families, including my own and the father of Geo. H. Himes, the Printer, were forced up for the winter. I purchased a little Kentucky rifle, the best I could get, paying \$40 for it, which did not originally cost much above \$6.00, and afterwards bought a second-hand Colt's revolver for \$24.00, which could now be had at any shop for \$3. Powder immediately advanced to \$2 and \$3 a pound, and lead from 75c. to \$1 a pound; provisions and supplies of all kinds almost thribbled in price.

#### FORMATION OF THE SECOND REGIMENT.

Governor Stevens succeeded in making his escape out of the upper country and upon return home and finding the state of affairs west of the mountains, immediately set about the organization of the entire available force of the whites of the Territory. Requisitions were sent to California for munitions of war and supplies, and an appeal made to Gov. Curry of Oregon to lend us all the aid he could spare. The time of service of the first companies called out having expired they were disbanded, and several new companies enlisted, forming what is known as the Second Regiment, Washington Territory volunteers.

Company C, B. L. Henness, Captain, was organized at Olympia, to serve six months or until the close of the Indian war, as was all the other companies of the 2nd Regiment. B. F. Shaw,



of Vancouver, was commissioned Colonel of the Regiment, and Gilmore Hays, Major of Battalion.

As soon as the weather would permit, the Governor determined to erect a line of blockhouses, or fortifications for supplies, along line of the old military wagon road leading across the mountains over the Nachess Pass. This road, or trail it would be more proper to call, had been opened some years before at government expense, and over which one train of immigrants had crossed in 1853, after much hard labor. This was the only known route across the mountains, but the winter storms had again prostrated the timber across it in many places as to almost obliterate all signs of a former road. By opening this road and erecting a line of fortifications along it, access to the back or mountainous country could be gained, which would force the Indians out of their hiding places, drive them across the mountains, or should the war east of the mountains be prolonged, afford communication with the Sound. With this end in view, the Governor commissioned Jos. White, of Thurston county, to recruit a company of sappers and miners, to be called "The Pioneer Company." This company was principally recruited in and around Steilacoom, and was composed of men who had served in the regular army from five to fifteen years, old whalers and a few marines, some farmers and farmers' sons, first settlers, and two Kanakas—the latter stalwart, active fellows, who rendered much valuable service during the campaign. Although many of them were not skilled in the use of axes or tools, yet they knew how to handle their guns, and were as brave and fearless as tigers, tough as pine knots, and inured to all kinds of hardships. They had to be kept constantly in motion, however, to keep down insubordination and rows among themselves, and if we camped at night anywhere within twelve or fifteen miles of a barrel of whiskey or box of tobacco, more than half of it would be in camp the next morning.

White having recruited the company, was, of course, elected Captain, U. E. Hicks was chosen First Lieutenant, and McLane Chambers, Second Lieutenant. My commission as First Lieutenant is dated February 8, 1856. We were duly mustered and sworn in as a regular company of volunteers, and were recognized as such by the U. S. troops.

Our first rendezvous was on the Yelm Prairie, where we built a store and blockhouse. We then moved to Montgomery's, some fifteen or eighteen miles further on. Here we were joined by several other companies. A large amount of stores were soon collected at this place, occupying a large barn. From here on we had to open the road as we progressed, and were followed by some twenty or thirty ox-teams, drawing heavily loaded wagons with supplies, with Captains Henness, Swindall, and perhaps other companies, as escort. We waded the Puyallup in the advance, and camped, without fire, shelter, or supper, in a cold drenching

rain, at the spot where the old settlers had been surrounded and attacked at the commencement of hostilities.

#### DEATH OF KANASKUT.

About half a mile further on a company of regulars were encamped near the steep high hill up which the trail meandered. They had placed a picket-guard of three men a short distance up the hill. Just at daylight the next morning they saw three Indians stealthily crawling down the hill toward camp. When within easy gun-shot the savages stopped behind a large log, completely hid from camp, but within plain view of the picket-guard. One of the Indians raised up, with his gun pointed over the log, intently watching the camp, evidently waiting a favorable opportunity to pick off an officer or some prominent man whom he personally knew. A few soldiers had just begun to stir in camp, when the best marksman of the picket-guard drew a bead on the Indian and at the crack of his gun the Indian threw up his hands, his gun fell over the log opposite him, and he sank down. The other two Indians broke and ran back up the hill, were fired at by the other two guard, but were missed. In an instant both camps were on their feet, ready for an attack. On approaching the Indian he was found lying on his back, with a long murderous-looking knife drawn, with which he would cut and slash at any one who came within possible reach. A minnie ball from the guard's rifle had gone clean through him from shoulder to shoulder, disabling him from standing on his feet, but he could still use his arms. A rope was procured, lassoed around one foot, and he was dragged down the hill and into camp. He proved to be Kanaskut, a White river Indian chief, well-known as a brave and desperate enemy to the whites, and feared by all. After a short parley with him, in which he evinced all the malignant hatred of a wounded eagle, he was dispatched with a bullet through his brains. Much relief was felt when it was known that Kanaskut was killed.

From there we pushed on over to Connell's Prairie, where we erected a large storehouse, blockhouse and hospital buildings. Some forty head of beef cattle were here slaughtered and salted-down, and a big barrel of whiskey stolen out of the hospital one night by the boys in camp.

About the time of the completion of this work, word was brought to us that the Indians had attacked a small company of regulars under command of Lieut. Slaughter, and a company of volunteer commanded by Capt. C. H. Hewitt; that Slaughter had been killed, the troops routed, and all their camp equipage and about forty government mules captured. This occurred over on the Muck, somewhere near the junction of Green river, about ten miles below us on White river. It was afterwards learned that the hostiles west of the mountains had been reinforced by about

sixty warriors from the Clickitats, and that these Indians had been watching the movements of the regular troops, deeming them the most formidable foe, and had paid but little attention to the doings of the volunteers. While we were at work on Connell's Prairie the escort guard had made several scouting tours through the woods and hills around, but had seen no signs of Indians.

#### BATTLE OF CONNELL'S PRAIRIE.

On the morning of March 10, 1856, Capt. White's "Pioneer Company" was ordered to proceed on and open the road to the crossing of White river, for the purpose of erecting a blockhouse there. The company started out early in the morning, a little after sun-up. The sun had risen bright and clear, and there was considerable frost on the ground. Each man carried an ax, cross-cut saw or other tool, in one hand, and his gun in the other. We also had one yoke of steers with us, to drag the logs away when cut in two. Capt. White ordered me to take three men and proceed some two or three hundred yards in advance, to look out for Indians and give warning of approaching danger. On reaching the timber, about one mile from camp, the trail descended a sharp little hill, about seventy or eighty feet in height. The road had to be cut sidling down the hill. On descending the hill and proceeding a short distance further, we came to an old trail leading directly up the hill, the brow of which was not a hundred yards distant. Here we discovered very fresh moccasin and mule tracks in the frost. I instantly knew that it was the same Indians who had attacked Slaughter and Hewitt, on the Muckelshoot. The main company was not yet in sight, or within hailing distance. Myself and one of my men walked up this trail to perhaps within ten or twenty feet of the top of the hill, which was covered with fallen timber and pretty thick brush, but not a leaf or a twig moved to indicate the presence of the enemy. I afterward saw numbers of Indians rise up from these same logs and brush. On regaining the bottom of the hill the main company came in sight and I gave the alarm. The words had hardly escaped my lips before a hail-storm of bullets and arrows whizzed around us. But, fortunately, no one was hit by the first volley. We instinctively jumped behind the nearest trees or logs, each one seeking shelter the best he could for the moment; but one poor fellow (our best axeman), unfortunately, did n't get behind a tree large enough, for on peeking around the tree he naturally bent his body, thus exposing his head and rump, and having a very small head his enemy fired at the biggest mark, making a terrible flesh-wound, though breaking no bones. Although the poor fellow was sorely wounded, still many of us could not help laughing over it, even at the time. The Indians, evidently flushed with success in beating back the regulars and small companies of volunteers who were endeavoring to penetrate their mountain fastnesses without



the aid of blockhouses, from the direction of Seattle, had come up to Connell's Prairie, with their entire force, perhaps 250 in number, to clean us out. There were about 175 whites. They had seen our company approaching the timber and had made preparation to receive, surround and scalp us in a few minutes. They waited until the main company had got down the hill, when, by suddenly opening fire on us, it was expected we would run a few steps further on to another decline, where they had posted sixty of their picked men, to receive and scalp all who might escape the first fire. But, instead of doing as the Indians had expected, we stood our ground, or rather, if anything, pushed back up under the hill from whence the attack had first come, and replied whenever we saw any of the naked and painted red devils to shoot at. At camp, very fortunately for us, were about forty volunteers standing in line, all ready to go out on a scout that morning. As quick as the report of the Indians' guns reached camp they started on a keen run to our assistance. The distance was about a mile, as before stated. On nearing the timber, those in advance saw the smoke rising up from the brush and logs before described, and thought it was us firing down the hill. The Indians were so intent watching our movements that they did not notice the coming of white men behind them, until some ten or a dozen of our boys were right in their midst. Then it seemed as if all Hades had been let loose, and that the demons of the damned were all there. The roar of musketry was deafening for a few moments, when the Indians began to give way a little. In the mean time the sixty devils who had been waiting for us, seeing that we did not come according to contract, had begun crawling up on us from behind, and had not help come they would have had our scalps anyhow, in fifteen or twenty minutes more. But the driving away of the Indians from the brow of the hill, down which we had come, enabled us to regain the top or level again and join our rescuers. The firing then opened all along the line of timber and brush, for half a mile or more in length, toward camp. At the edge of the timber was a steep little rise, at the foot of which lay a deep miry swamp, covered with thorns, briars and hardhack, through which one had to almost cut his way with a butcher's knife; but back of this the timber was more open. The Indians ran along the open timber, toward camp, the swamp and blown down trees affording almost complete breastworks and shelter from attack in front.

Learning that some of my company had been wounded, and that the Captain had jumped into a hollow stump and was still there, I procured assistance, and by running directly in front of the enemy's fire, we succeeded in getting the wounded into camp. Three had been wounded quite severely, but none mortally.

About fifty yards distant from the open space through which we ran with our wounded, was a line of quaking-asps, the twigs

and leaves of which fell in a shower, as if being stripped by invisible hands, cut by bullets and arrows fired at us.

At camp great confusion prevailed; no one seemed to be in command, but everyone ready to fight on his own hook. A party of us, however, soon organized and started out to charge the Indians along the brush and hill-side. In this charge some of my sailor-boys proved valuable in wading the swamp and climbing logs in the advance. We captured one Indian, who was quickly dispatched, and several drums, bows and arrows, which the enemy were compelled to drop in their flight. On gaining the brow of the hill we were compelled to halt, for want of knowledge as to where our own forces were, fearing that we might mistake them for the enemy in the brush. Much valuable time was thus lost, for had the charge, so favorably commenced, been vigorously kept up, seconded by assistance all along the line, not many Indians would have escaped. As it was, however, when they heard our yells and knew that we had commenced to charge, they quickly began to retreat, dragging their dead and wounded with them. After a time we proceeded on, but saw no more Indians; they were routed and gone. The fight lasted from about 8 o'clock in the morning until 3 in the afternoon.

Of the number of the enemy killed or wounded we had only to guess, but on going over the ground we discovered many places marked with pools of blood, and trails where they had dragged their wounded back into the timber; also, two or three hats perforated with bullet-holes, with hair, blood and brains on the inside. We learned, long afterwards, that about thirty Indians had been killed and wounded in this battle, although we did not get but one at the time.

At the commencement of the fight numerous squaws were seen in the front ranks, beating drums, dancing and yelling, and otherwise encouraging their men. They believed the whites would not shoot at them, but the boys, getting tired of such nonsense, knocked over a few of them, and thereafter the rest kept more hid, but still encouraged their men with unearthly screams and yells, and the beating of drums. The Indians were frequently within speaking distance, and would banter our boys (many of whom they personally knew, calling them by name), with the vilest epithets the *jargon* language could convey.

#### OTHER BLOCKHOUSES AND BULLETS.

On Wednesday following we again started out, opened the road to White river crossing, and began the erection of a block-house. We were accompanied this time by an escort guard from Capt. Henness' company. Opposite the site selected for the block-house is a high bluff, the top within gunshot, which was left unguarded, because of the difficult crossing of the river. On Thursday noon, 'Vene Phillips, of the picket-guard, jokingly gave a

false alarm. Some men were notching down the logs on the corners, while others were pushing heavy logs up the skids. On seeing Phillips waving his cap, we all rushed for our guns, when, as much to his surprise as to ours, another hailstorm of bullets fell among us from the top of the bluff. No one was wounded by the first volley, though several had their hats and clothing pierced by bullets. A single shot, however, struck one of Phillip's companions in the back of the neck, the bullet passing inside the jugular vein and coming out at the bur of the ear. He was picked up for dead, but finally revived, and is still living, I believe, though mentally deranged. Neither he nor any of the wounded in this war, have received any recognition from the government, to my knowledge, other than the paltry pay finally allowed the volunteers. No reply was made to the Indians, as they were beyond the reach of our guns, and the river lay between. But we completed the house next day, and posted a guard inside, as had been done with all the others erected.

We then returned and built a blockhouse at the crossing of the Puyallup. From there we opened a road to South Prairie, the present locality of the famed Carbonado coal mines, where we erected another blockhouse.

#### DEATH OF JOHN EDGAR.

A short time prior to our arrival on South Prairie, John Edgar, then residing upon and owning the old well-known Edgar farm, on the Yelm Prairie, and who had an Indian wife, and could speak the Indian language well, had gone out to South Prairie, in company with a small party, to meet and have a talk with a few Indians whom he had learned were on this prairie. A small deep stream ran along the northern and western edges, whose banks were covered with very thick underbrush. A tree, blown down, spanned the banks. Edgar was the first to get upon the log, closely followed by two companions. When quite close to the up-turned roots of the tree on the opposite bank, an Indian, concealed behind the roots, fired a Hudson's Bay musket, the ball passing through Edgar's body, through the side of his next companion (a half-breed), and slightly wounding a friendly Indian who came third. Edgar fell off the log into the stream dead. The savage, of course, made his escape.

#### A PROMOTION.

From South Prairie we moved back to Montgomery's, where we erected a large store-house, blockhouse and other buildings, and named Fort Hicks.

Before the completion of this work, Captain White resigned his commission, as, in fact, he had not commanded the company from a short time after the fight on Connell's Prairie. The Second Lieutenant had also resigned his commission some time previous,



and as the whole duty had devolved upon me up to this time, the company demanded that I be elected and commissioned Captain. My commission as Captain is dated May 24, 1856, and the oath of office was taken before Governor Stevens in person. I value these papers now as much for the sake of the autographs of Isaac I. Stevens and James Tilton as for other reasons. Stevens was killed early in the great civil war, and Tilton died some years ago in Delaware, I believe.

#### MARTIAL LAW, ETC.

At the commencement of hostilities Governor Stevens, who was Superintendent of Indians Affairs for the Territory, selected a large island in the Sound, near Steilacoom, as a reservation, to which all friendly or non-combatant Indians were required to go, where they would be sheltered, fed and protected at government expense. All prisoners taken were also required to be sent there. A number of the latter had been placed there, where they would remain a few days, until sufficiently recruited, and then jump into the bay, swim to the main land, and the next day be out in the hostile camp. Several such were recaptured more than once, until the volunteers got tired of the business and quietly resolved to take no more prisoners.

Pierce county, within the territory of which the principal center of the hostile forces was located, was largely settled up by Hudson's Bay Company's employes, half-breeds, trappers and voyageurs, many of whom were living with Indian women. The town of Steilacoom was the county seat. (The city of Tacoma, where now resides more inhabitants than the whole Territory then contained, was not thought of.) A large majority of the then residents of Pierce county were believed, and not without reason, to be more friendly toward the Indians than they were to the Americans. Several such, suspected of furnishing information and aid to the enemy, together with Leschi, the chief before referred to, and a few other captured hostiles, were held as prisoners of war by the troops, and were about to be tried by court-martial. Their sympathising friends in the neighborhood gathered in Steilacoom, employed lawyers, and petitioned the civil authorities to rescue the prisoners from the hands of the military. Judge Edward Lander, Chief Justice of the Territory, was called upon to open court in Steilacoom for this purpose. Court was convened, a jury summoned, and a demand made for the release of the prisoners. The Governor, believing that such a course would greatly encourage the hostiles, besides setting at liberty known enemies, in which opinion he was backed by the entire volunteer force, immediately proclaimed martial law over the county of Pierce, sent a company of militia from Olympia, arrested Judge Lander, took him a prisoner to Montgomery's, and broke up the court. This action, of course, created intense excitement for a

time, but a few days sufficed for calmer reflection, and peace, law and order was soon restored. The suspected whites were held for a time, and finally released. Leschi and one or two other hostiles were afterwards duly tried before the court in Steilacoom and hung.

#### TROOPS CROSS THE MOUNTAIN.

A line of blockhouses now having been established to the foot or base of the pass across the mountains, and the hostile Indians on this side pretty well subdued since their disastrous defeat on Connell's Prairie, the entire volunteer force in the field were again gathered at Montgomery's, and preparation made to cross the mountains into the Yakima country. (My brother, Thos. B. Hicks, was in one of these companies.) Upon being mounted and regularly equipped, they were joined by Col. Casey's command of regular troops from Fort Steilacoom, and two companies of volunteers from Oregon. Col. B. F. Shaw took command as Colonel of the volunteer regiment. In this order they proceeded on their journey, leaving "Pioneer Company," and Capt. Swindall's company to scout the foot-hills and plains back of the settlements, while the "home guards" held the forts and blockhouses. The country over which our duties now extended was from forty to sixty miles in length, and twenty to thirty broad.

#### END OF HARD LABOR, PAY, ETC.

We returned to the Yelm Prairie, and from there opened the road to the Tenalquot Plains, where we erected another small blockhouse. This ended our labors as a company of miners and sappers.

By persistent hard pleading I procured horses and mounted a part of my company, relieving those whom I could not mount from further duty. We continued in this service as mounted scouts or rangers until some time in August, when we were mustered out of service, turning over our entire outfit to Quartermaster General W. W. Miller, in Olympia.

The war having ended, I returned to my little farm in the fall of that year, but in consequence of the loss of time and nearly all that I had accumulated, I found I could not recover and shortly afterwards sold out, moved to town and went to work at my trade. Seven years afterward, following a somewhat prolonged correspondence with the Third Auditor, I was paid a small sum out of the government treasury for my services. In this, however, I fared better than some of my neighbors, who gave or lost their all, and have not to this day been recompensed.

The pay finally allowed by the government was, to the private soldier or volunteer, \$18 per month and rations; to commissioned and non-commissioned officers, the same as allowed the regular army, but no clothing. Many of the men in my company were

more in debt to the government for clothing than their pay amounted to at the end of their service. Much of the clothing furnished was rotten, shoddy stuff, for which at least three prices were charged above cost. Frequently a man would put on a new pair of pants or boots in the morning, and come into camp at night in rags. Our work was rough, and most of the country through which we operated was mountainous and very rugged. Such clothing would not stand the wear.

In the matter of provisions we were generally well supplied, though occasionally being reduced to salt-junk and hard-tack. I may mention here, that the beef slaughtered and packed on Connell's Prairie all spoiled and had to be thrown away, caused, some say, by the beating of drums and the roar of musketry around it and our major on that beautiful March day, which may have had the same effect on poor beef that thunder is said to have on milk.

#### RECAPITULATION.

Number of blockhouses and other buildings erected by the company, nine.

Number of miles of road opened and repaired, about forty.

Number of men in company, at the highest, forty-six.

Time of service, six months.

Number of Indians killed or captured, *klone-as*.

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### SCENES AND INCIDENTS.

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#### SCENE ONE.

Upon completion of the blockhouse on South Prairie, and while waiting further orders, about twenty-five of us started out on a scout toward the foot of Mt. Rainier, carrying gun, cartridge-box (21 rounds), two days' provision and blanket. We took in company a young friendly Indian as guide or spy for Indian signs. We reach the mountain at dusk and camped just below the snow line on that magnificent peak. Thus far we had seen but very little indication of recent Indian sign, except a blazing fire from a few pieces of fir bark on the top of a high hill which we had just climbed, but no tracks or other sign. On our return the next day, by a different route, and while on a very high plateau, densely timbered, our Indian spy noticed a small fir limb sticking in the ground in a peculiar manner, showing that it could not have fallen thus from a tree, but not the least sign of foot-print or mark of Indian or animal. After a sharp close inspection another limb, similarly stuck, about 150 or 200 yards distant, was discovered. This led on to another, but still no track or trail, and so on for about one mile or more, when we entered a dense cedar swamp. Here we suddenly found a large number of cedar trees



quite recently stripped of bark, and a wide beaten track leading to a large ranch, built on a slight rise, close to a stream of water. We got close to the ranch before those inside suspected our presence. One shot was fired at us, but did no harm. As the savages came out of the one hole in front, they were shot down, big and little, squaws and all, except one buck and one squaw, who ran, side by side, the full length of our fire and escaped. In the ranch was found numerous household trinkets, dresses, dishes, spoons, knives and forks, rings, and keepsakes, taken from the residences of the families massacred on White river. I also found the scalp of one of the white women who had been so cruelly murdered. We saved such articles as might be desired by the friends of the murdered families, burned the ranch, and left the dead bodies of the savages just as they had fallen when shot.

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#### SCENE TWO.

A few days following this incident, a Lieutenant from Col. Casey's command, U. S. A., came out to South Prairie with about a dozen regulars, and were joined with an equal number of our boys. They proceeded on to the headwaters of the Nisqually, where another ranch of Indians was found. Some were killed and the remainder taken prisoners, including the squaws. They then returned to Montgomery's, where a trial was held and two of the prisoners sentenced to be shot and one hung. Execution was postponed until the next morning. The fellow sentenced to be hung howled and raved all night. An Indian fears death by hanging more than any other punishment. The next morning he told the guard that the great *Ta-mah-na-wis* spirit had come to him in the night and told him that he could not be hung; that the rope would break. The two who were shot met their doom without a murmur. A convenient oak limb was found near camp, and the black devil led out to it, all the while calling loudly on his spirit *Tyee*; one end of a rope was duly adjusted to his neck and the other thrown over the limb, when three or four pulled on it, raising the Indian five or six feet above ground. The body spun around rapidly for about half a minute, *when the rope did break sure enough*. A knife quickly cut the rope from his neck, and he was allowed to regain his breath for a few moments. In the mean time one of the boys ran back to camp and soon returned, dragging a long *lariat* through the wet grass. This was adjusted to the Indian's neck, and he was again swung up, where he remained several hours. His *Ta-mah-na-wis Ty-ee* had not calculated on the strength of a raw-hide rope.

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#### SCENE THREE.

When Gov. Stevens issued his proclamation commanding all peaceably disposed and non-combatant Indians to be removed to the island reservation, Dr. Tolmie, Chief Factor of the Hudson's

Company's post at Fort Nisqually, obtained permission from the Governor to keep a few Indians around his post, vouching for their conduct while the war lasted. [I will take this occasion to explain, that Dr. Tolmie did not then claim special rights or privileges by reason of his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, but a so-called Puget Sound Agricultural Company had been formed, exclusively by Hudson's Bay Company employes or those more or less connected therewith, which laid claim to large tracts of land within the Territory. Much litigation grew out of the claims of this Puget Sound Agricultural Company, which the American residents regarded as but another name for the old Hudson's Bay Company.] The Indians kept by Tolmie were suspicioned of giving information and aid to the hostiles whenever chance offered.

In my company was a man by the name of Lake, brother to one of the families massacred on White river. Of course he was bitter against all red-skins, friend or foe. The sad fate of his dear relatives seemed to weigh upon his mind, so much so that at times he would become almost frantic, and it was with difficulty that he could be restrained from acts of violence toward friendly Indians in our own camp. The poor fellow died shortly after the close of the war, from over-exposure and mental worry.

While the companies were camped at Montgomery's preparatory to crossing the mountains, Lake obtained a furlough to go to Steilacoom, eighteen miles distant, on private business. On his return the next evening he passed Fort Nisqually just at dusk, and was seen by some squaws. A short distance beyond the fort he saw a big Indian buck in the woods close to the trail. The temptation was too great for him to withstand, so he levelled his gun and knocked the Indian over, the report of his rifle being heard at the fort. On reaching camp at night, he sent for me. I found him hid away in his tent, when he whispering told me what he had did. I scolded him for the act, but still could not help sympathizing with him, as, indeed, he had the sympathy of the entire company and camp. I cautioned him to keep quiet and promised that I would do what I could to shield him from further trouble. The next morning Dr. Tolmie, accompanied by two or three squaws, appeared in camp, and immediately entered complaint before Colonel Shaw that one of his friendly Indians had been killed the evening before, near the fort, by a volunteer, and had brought the squaws along to identify the man seen passing the fort a few minutes before hearing the report of the rifle, and if the man could be found, he (Tolmie) demanded his immediate arrest and punishment. The Colonel ordered all the companies to be drawn up in line. It then became generally known what had happened, and it required considerable effort on the part of the officers to keep the men in line while the roll was being called and they were being examined by Tolmie and his

squaws. My company was the last to be examined, and although it was by that time pretty generally suspected who they were after, still it was hoped by the boys that by noise and confusion they would so frighten the squaws that they would fail to identify. The line was passed without identification (Lake had changed his clothing), when Dr. Burns (the same Doctor referred to in the early part of this story), knowing Lake to be the suspected party and had been absent from camp a day or two previous, and being a warm friend to Tolmie, pointed to where Lake stood in line, when he was recognized by the squaws. Scarcely had he been pointed out by the squaws, before the men, in spite of the efforts of their officers, broke ranks and with wild yells rushed for their guns, threatening dire vengeance upon Tolmie and his squaws if Lake was touched. It required the utmost exertion on the part of the officers to save them from assault. They ran for dear life to the Colonel's tent, imploring his protection. The officers surrounded the tent and kept back the infuriated mob until order was somewhat restored, when the Doctor agreed that if the men would permit him and his squaws to escape he would not molest Lake any further. A way was opened for them, through which they ran to their horses, quickly mounted, and galloped off, no doubt heartily glad to get away with their scalps, to the now infinite amusement of the men. No more was heard of the affair.

#### SCENE FOUR.

Among the residents in my neighborhood was a much respected farmer named Wm. White, whose family, with others, were fortified up in what was known as "Eaton Fort," on Chambers' Prairie. No hostile Indians having been seen or heard of in that neighborhood for a long time, the family went, on Sunday, to a religious meeting, held in a country school house a few miles distant. Mrs. White and another lady named Stewart, with a child in her arms, rode in a small one-horse cart, while Mr. White walked and drove. On their return, and when almost within sight of the fort, a party of six Indians, headed by "Yelm Jim," a well-known Indian in that neighborhood, rushed out, on horseback, from a point of timber near the road, and attacked White. An effort was made to get hold of the reins of White's horse, and in the scuffle they were dropped. A shot was fired at White, wounding him severely, but he still continued to fight his assailants manfully, until overpowered and killed. In the meantime the horse, taking fright at the shots and noise, started on a keen run down the road toward the fort. An attempt was made to overtake him, but he was too fleet for the savages' ponies. The women clung to the cart, and the big gate being open, the horse ran straight into the fort, thus saving the lives of the two women and child; but the mother holding the child in her arms had one foot terribly mangled by the wheel of the cart, and but one board



remained of the cart-bed when they reached the fort. The body of Mr. White was found the next day, by a relief party, near the scene of attack, stripped and horribly cut to pieces. Yelm Jim was afterward caught and hung for this deed. Mrs. White is now the wife of Hon. S. D. Ruddell, of Olympia.

About this time, or perhaps prior, a man by the name of Northcraft, engaged in hauling supplies from Olympia to the Yelm Prairie, was waylaid on the road about half-way between Chamber's Prairie and the Yelm, the savages taking him from the wagon, after he was wounded, and tying him to a tree, amused themselves by shooting arrows into him, and otherwise tormenting him until he expired. The wagon and contents, what they could not carry away with them, was destroyed.

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#### EXPLANATORY AND APOLOGETIC.

The foregoing recollections have been written almost wholly from memory, having but little data at this date to aid or refresh the mind; but many of the scenes and incidents are almost as vivid to me now as at the time of their occurrence, *thirty years ago*. I have endeavored to confine these reminiscences, as much as possible, to matters in which I took part, and to state facts only from the stand-point in which I then viewed them, or believed them to exist. That others of my comrades in these trying times may have different recollections and different views I do not doubt, for no two, perhaps, had exactly the same experience. In looking over the field at this distant day, and viewing the wonderful changes that have been wrought out in one short life-time; the populous and wealthy cities, the beautiful farm-homes, wide roads, steamships, telegraph lines, and the iron-horse now penetrating the same dense forests and shooting across the same cold rapid streams, where I then wandered and waded, I am often lost in wonder, and the scenes I have above attempted to describe seem but as a dream. More alarm was felt then, no doubt, than there was real cause for, but we were isolated, in a new, wild and rugged country, few in number, and poor in resources of defense. I could add many other incidents—some laughable, some pathetic, and others distressing—but my story is now much longer than I expected to make it. If I have interested the reader by depicting some of the labors, trials, hardships and dangers encountered by the pioneers of the northwest coast, my purpose has been accomplished. And what shall be said of the wives and mothers of those days,—of the anxieties, self-denials, privations, doubts and fears, endured and heroically sustained? God only is able to give the reward.

URBAN EAST HICKS.

PORTLAND, OREGON, February 10, 1886.

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# ADDENDA.

Since the above was in type, a friend placed in my hands a book, entitled "Fifty Years Experience," etc., written by Brevt. Brig. General E. D. Keyes, U. S. A., in which I find that I was somewhat mistaken as to the time of the death of Lieutenant W. A. Slaughter. He was killed, according to Gen. Keyes' account, in December, 1855. But I still stick to the mule part of the story, and the further fact that the hostile Indians, west of the mountains, never got their final defeat until they received it at the hands of the volunteers on Connell's Prairie. And I may be permitted to add, that notwithstanding the open jealousy of the the regular army toward volunteers, I honestly believe the latter were the better Indian fighters. But, as the American settlers will never again witness such wars, because there are no more Indians to kill, we will drop that part of the controversy. Lieut. Slaughter was much respected by his comrades in the regular army and very popular among the volunteers, and had he lived would have risen to high rank in his profession, as nearly or quite all West Pointers did who visited this coast in an early day.

It will be seen that the above reminiscences are confined exclusively to the section of country between Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains. What took place in Eastern Washington, or in Oregon, I have not attempted to more than touch upon, as I knew but little of the scenes in those fields.

The following short biographical sketch of the writer is taken from "Lang's History of the Willamette Valley":

HICKS, URBAN E.—Born in Boone County, Missouri, May 14, 1828; served five years' apprenticeship at the printers' trade in Paris, Monroe County, and at Hannibal, on the Mississippi river. Married Miss Eliza Jane Leedom, in 1850, in Schuyler County; went to St. Louis, and in the spring of 1851, set out for Oregon, overland. Settled at the mouth of the Cowlitz river; taught school, and in 1852, came to Portland; worked a short time at his trade; located on a claim three miles east of East Portland; moved to Salt Creek, Polk County, and from there to Puget Sound, in 1853, where his wife died, leaving one son—Dr. Frank P., of Astoria [now of Tacoma]. Married Miss India Ann Hartsock, in 1855, by whom he has one son living—G. Gwin, [also of Tacoma]. Took part in the Indian war of 1855-6, going out as first lieutenant, and afterwards promoted to captain; was assessor and county clerk of Thurston County, and assistant secretary of the first Territorial Council of Washington Territory; was at different times elected by the legislature, Territorial Librarian, Territorial Auditor, and Quartermaster General; was also deputy U. S. Marshal, Notary Public, etc. Mr. Hicks has had a varied experience in the newspaper business. In 1861-62 he published the *Vancouver Telegraph*; in 1864-65, published the *Washington Democrat*, at Olympia; moved his plant to Salem, Oregon, in 1865-66, and in connection with A. Noltner and C. B. Bellinger, published the *Democratic Review*; went to Portland and was city editor of the *Daily Oregon Herald*; started the *East Portland Democratic Era*, in 1871; and in 1874 was engaged as editor of the *Vancouver Register*. He now resides in Portland.





